

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 13, 15, 17, 18, 25 and 26 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 13 and 25 are amended, claim 16 is canceled and claim 26 is added. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 13, 15, 17, 18 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bando (U.S. Patent No. 5,396,736) in view of Bovone (U.S. Patent No. 5,433,657) and Ercole et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,848,005). In addition, claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bando, in view of Bovone, Ercole et al. and Monforte (U.S. Patent No. 4,809,425). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 13, 25 and 26 includes the following new features which Bando, Bovone and Ercole et al. and Monforte do not disclose:

“a plurality of suction cups which are held on said grinding supporting table by being attached by suction to said grinding supporting table and suck and hold the glass plate by sucking the glass plate whose peripheral edge is to be ground, said plurality of suction cups being separated from each other, and arranging means for disposing (or arranging) said plurality of suction cups, respectively, at positions corresponding to a shape of the glass plate to be ground”.

The structure set forth in claims 13, 25 and 26, allows the desired number of suction cups to be flexibly and freely arranged on said grinding supporting table in correspondence with the shape of the glass plate. Hence, it is possible to arrange each suction cup at a suitable position for sucking and holding the glass plate corresponding to each shape of glass plate.

By contrast, the applied prior art does not teach or suggest this subject matter. In particular, Bovone teaches a plurality of suction cups that are hinged together to form a chain.

Thus, the suction cups are not separate from one another, but rather are attached due to the hinges.

Moreover, one of ordinary skill in the art would likely not have provided an arranging means as taught by Monforte for Bovone's linked group of suction cups, as Monforte's grippers would necessarily be required to grip all suction cups in the chain simultaneously in order to transport them to the desired position. At best Montforte teaches grippers to move single items, one by one, there being no provision or disclosure for moving a plurality of suction cups that are linked together as in Bovone. In any event, such a combination would not have been predictable given the difficulties that would necessarily be involved in coordinating a plurality of gripper pairs to locate, lift and place a plurality of linked suction cups.

Claim 25 takes a slightly different approach as it includes suction cups that are separated and individually movable relative to each other, and arranging means for individually disposing the suction cups. Clearly, the Bovone/Montforte combination does not teach this subject matter.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all the claims are patentable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, in the fee(s) filed, or asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Account No. 14-1140 under Order No. PTB-1207-116.

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Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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